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ABSTRACT

The reported project attempted to determine if formal inservice training improves the performance of paraprofessional aides in the classroom. Ninety-two teachers at four elementary schools examined the administrative, clerical, supervisory, instructional, and housekeeping duties most frequently performed by paraprofessionals and rated them on the effectiveness of their performance by responding to a questionnaire. The results indicate that paraprofessional aides who participate in a formal inservice training program and those who receive incidental on-the-job training basically perform the same kinds of duties, with their performance differing in frequency, variety, and competence. It was further revealed that formal inservice training programs place great emphasis on specific duties, which tends to restrict the aide to tasks within the scope of that training; while incidental on-the-job training programs promote the performance of a greater variety of tasks. The investigation suggests that, to be practical and effective, inservice programs for paraprofessional aides should be designed at the local school level and should involve both the formal and the informal aspects of training. (Author)

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EVALUATING THE SERVICES OF PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDES

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Practicum report, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, Nova University

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Dr. Thomas Minter

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this practicum was to determine if formal in-service training improves the performance of paraprofessional aides in the classroom. Teachers examined the administrative, clerical, supervisory, instructional, and housekeeping duties most frequently performed by paraprofessionals and rated them on the effectiveness of their performance by responding to a questionnaire. The results indicated that paraprofessional aides who participated in a formal in-service training program and those who received incidental on-the-job training basically performed the same kinds of duties. Their performance differed in frequency, variety, and competency. It was further revealed that formal in-service training programs placed great emphasis on specific duties which tended to restrict the aide to tasks within the scope of that training; incidental on-the-job training programs advocated the performance of a far greater variety of tasks. The study suggests that in-service programs for paraprofessional aides, to be practical and effective, should be designed at the local school level and should involve both formal and informal aspects of training.

INTRODUCTION

Many schools receiving federal funds, foundation grants, and increased local funds are using paraprofessional aides as a means for extending the instructional services of classroom teachers. Initially, the duties of paraprofessional aides were limited to non-instructional tasks, but their role has been expanded by schools to include direct instructional assistance to pupils. In view of the changing and expanding role of the paraprofessional and the new emphasis being placed on the services they perform, many administrators and teachers are advocating that schools take a closer look at in-service training programs for paraprofessional aides.

Gudridge (1972), in describing the inadequacy of paraprofessional aide training programs, maintained that the typical aide receives no training prior to employment. It was pointed out that fewer than half of the aides, even after appointment, participated in in-service training programs. In recent years programs that have been organized have taken a variety of forms. Programs ranging from formalized sessions to incidental on-the-job training have been developed. The degree of formality as viewed by Brotherson and Johnson (1971) is determined by those conducting the program and the methods, techniques, and procedures employed.

Despite the increased emphasis being placed on in-service training of paraprofessionals, research on the effectiveness of these programs has been minimal. The objective of this comparative study is to evaluate the effec-

tiveness of paraprofessional aides from one school district in Philadelphia who were involved in a formal in-service training program, with paraprofessional aides from the same district who participated in an incidental on-the-job training program. The criteria to be examined will be the tasks performed by the aide as evaluated by the teacher. No attempt will be made to ascertain the effects of paraprofessional aide performance and service on pupil achievement.

The practicum, based on a review of the literature, will offer justification for the need to determine the effectiveness of a paraprofessional program. The study will include a detailed description of a paraprofessional aide program. The program, based on the Philadelphia School System, will direct attention to funding, selection, duties, assignment, in-service training programs, and supervision of paraprofessional aides. This section will be documented with literary references that support or challenge the procedures used in the teacher aide program. Specifically, the report will survey, analyze, and make recommendations resulting from a comparison by teachers of the effectiveness of paraprofessionals who have had formal in-service training with paraprofessionals who participated in incidental on-the-job training.

THE NEED TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE PROGRAM

The utilization of paraprofessional aides in the school has become a significant movement in education in recent years due to social, educational, and economic forces. Harrison (1967) indicated that the major hypothesis supporting the use of paraprofessionals in the classroom has been the promotion of improved instruction. Increased use of aides is believed to bring about the following conditions:

1. A reduction of the time teachers spend on incidental activities or chores.
2. An improvement of the teaching-learning environment by helping to provide more order and systematization.
3. Increased instructional time.
4. Individualization of instruction.

Hornburger (1968) concurred with Robb (1969) when it was stated that greater demands are placed on the schools, and these dramatic changes are due to expanded curricula, reorganization of the structures patterns in schools, differeniated roles for teachers, and individualization of instruction as well as the availability of funds.

Tanner and Tanner (1969), in a national survey of state departments on the role and function of teacher aides, indicated that provisions were made for the employment of aides for compensatory education programs in 1966. Legislative action at that time served as the basis and paved the way for the instructional aide program to be implemented in regular educational programs.

The increased use of paraprofessional aides at all levels of school organization necessitates directing attention to formulating an acceptable and credible means of determining the effectiveness of the services aides render. (Gudridge, 1972). Wright (1969) has stated that many systems, districts, and schools have developed their own policies and guidelines regarding the evaluation of tasks aides perform. Because of the variety in qualifications and backgrounds aides are performing any number of non-instructional, semi-instructional, and instructional duties. Bloom (1973), on the other hand, discounted Brotherson and Johnson (1971) when he stated that the role of the aide has been strictly limited to tasks that emphasize "assisting". Care has been exercised to avoid involving the aide in direct instructional tasks. The most recent trend has caused much concern and has become quite controversial because of the disparity in attempts to differeniate instructional from non-instructional tasks. (Tanner, 1969). A suggested alternative was proposed by Bloom (1973). It advocated greater involvement of aides in instructional roles by developing new staffing configurations, combining the talents and abilities of teachers and aides.

It was agreed by Brotherson and Johnson (1971) that how the aide is used and the scope of duties performed will depend on several factors. Among them are:

1. Needs of the community, the school, and the pupils.
2. Attitude and creativity of the teacher.
3. Capability of the aide.
4. School policy and state law.

Levin (1970) conducted a study and recommended that there be a more expansive and flexible utilization of the talents and abilities of aides. Additional evidence supporting this premise was provided by August and Mauser who reported the positive effects of aides in tutorial and remediation programs and individualization of instruction.

Increased use and responsibility of aides and their expanded role dictates the establishment of an acceptable method for evaluating the effectiveness of services rendered. Robb (1969) strongly believes that "as with any program or product of high quality, an aide program can survive only to the extent that it grows and improves ". Realistic objectives of an effective paraprofessional aide program should deal with--

1. Reinforcement and assurance of a steady supply of aides.
2. Consistency and continuity in the program.
3. Adequate in-service training and continuous evaluation.

A PARAPROFESSIONAL AIDE PROGRAM

Availability of Paraprofessional Aides

Funding: Federal legislation of 1964, 1965, and 1967 provided much of the financial means for employing paraprofessional aides in schools throughout the country. The result has been a rapid escalation in the number of aides in the classrooms whose salaries are financed totally or jointly from ESEA or OEO funds and private foundations. According to Tanner (1969), about forty percent of all teacher aide programs got their start in the 1965-66 school year. While most districts provide for the employment of aides through federal funds and from foundations, Gudridge (1972) stated that the use of local funds is the most desirable financial approach because it tends to have a stablizing effect on planning and implementation. The use of general funds alleviates uncertainty of governmental and legislative involvement and provides reasonable assurance of the continuity of paraprofessional programs in the school.

The School District of Philadelphia has participated in teacher aide programs since the mid-sixties but initiated a massive program of paraprofessional aide involvement following the adoption of " A System For Reading Improvement For The 70's." In a concentrated effort to place the highest priority on an established means for the improvement of reading achievement at all levels of the school system, the District authorized the employment and use of paraprofessionals who would work under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher. The aides would provide reinforcement of

learning and assist the teacher in non-instructional activities related to the management of the classroom and instructional programs.

The main sources of financial support for the paraprofessional aide program in Philadelphia were federal and operating funds. All schools were eligible for operating budget monies, however federal funds were available only to those schools designated as Title I. The development of cooperative projects made it possible for non-Title I schools to receive the benefits of federally - costed personnel.

Allocation of funds to the schools were based on a per-pupil ratio established at the district level under the jurisdiction of a district superintendent. The number of pupils who scored a year or more below grade level was an additional consideration in the allocation of federal monies. Each school was held accountable for budgeting and expending the money received. The number of aides employed by a school varied, depending not only on money available but on the academic and achievement level of the pupil population, the needs of the school as determined by the staff and administration, and the program accepted for implementation.

Selection Procedure: Qualifications for paraprofessional aides differ markedly throughout the states. The establishment of criteria for selection and the development of selection procedures are vital to the success of a paraprofessional aide program. The selection of aides should involve cooperative planning efforts on the part of personnel from all levels of a school system. Research surveys indicated that while employment and deployment

practices of aides are the major responsibility of a school district, the building principal is ultimately charged with staffing his school. In the selection, consideration is given to the following factors: (1) local structure, (2) local conditions, and (3) local needs.

Paraprofessional Aides who serve in Philadelphia schools are recruited and subsequently hired under the policies and guidelines established by the Office of Non-Instructional Personnel. The availability of jobs are advertised through job opportunity flyers issued to all schools. The announcement details for the reader the job title, purpose, criteria, typical duties, salary, and selection and application procedures.

A degree of flexibility is permitted in hiring aides in order to effect an aide program in a school which will render maximum service and benefits to the pupils. The Office of Personnel lists the following minimum requirements for the position:

1. Possess education, training or experience equivalent to the completion of the twelfth school grade.
2. Possess significant experience and interest in working with children.
3. Be between the ages of 18 and 62.

Many schools extend the requirements stating that a candidate for the position must be a resident of the community. The aide who lives in the child's own neighborhood often communicates with the child in a way that is neither threatening nor strange. He may help the child adjust and also interpret some aspects of his behavior to the teacher. (Bank Street College of Education, 1967). Preference is sometimes given to volunteers who have

served in the school over a period of time without remuneration, if they qualify for the position and are successful in the examination administered. Priority is given to qualified applicants who have children in attendance at the school where employment is being sought.

The selection of paraprofessional aides is conducted at the individual schools and is the ultimate responsibility of the school administrator. Selection guidelines and procedures must be followed consistently so that each candidate is similarly examined. The committee to screen the candidates is appointed by the principal, must be bi-racial whenever possible, and should include the school principal, reading teacher, and a parent or a community representative. The committee grades the candidates on their strengths, as demonstrated in the oral examination, in the areas of (1) experience working with children, (2) knowledge of typical child behavior and ability to relate to children, (3) ability to read audibly, clearly, and correctly, and (4) ability to relate to school personnel, parents and community. The selection process continues until each school fills its positions with qualified personnel.

Candidates, upon completion of the oral examination, are rated by the committee individually and collectively. Ratings are entered on a form designed and supplied by the Office of Personnel. A candidate can receive a numerical score ranging from 0 - 100 with 70 as the minimum passing score. Failing scores given by a committee member have to be substantiated with adequate comments. A candidate's score in the examination is the median

score of the examination committee. The median score determines the candidates position on the eligibility list. The eligibility list was used to fill the number of positions available in the school.

Vacancies created by resignations and dismissals are filled by using the eligibility list or recommendation list of aides whose services were terminated because of transfers or budgetary cutbacks.

Assignment and Supervision

There is no one universal method for the assignment of paraprogress aides. The school administrator and the reading teacher are mainly responsible for the assignment of paraprofessional aides to the classroom. The manner in which assignments are made varies and is dependent upon several factors:

1. The nature and quality of teaching experience of the teacher.
2. The contributions the teacher can make toward the growth and development of the assigned aide.
3. The knowledge and methodological skills demonstrated by the aide during the examination process.
4. The ability and achievement levels of the students to be served.

To insure the greatest degree of success in the performance of duties, special attention is directed to the personal attributes exhibited and displayed by the aide that will be most effective in creating a more desirable learning environment in certain classrooms.

Some schools elect to use a more unique method for the assignment of aides. The assignment is mutually determined by the aide and the

teacher following the completion of two well-planned informal orientation sessions. (Gudridge, 1972). The sessions involve open discussions, Sharing of expectations and desires, outlining classroom goals and objectives, detailing classroom management and instructional programs, and displaying for examination and review program materials. The second session is patterned after the first but is broader in scope and depth. As the sessions progress aides and teachers find they are attracted to each other. At the conclusion of the orientation sessions approximately ninety-five percent of the assignments have been decided. The remaining assignments are arbitrarily made.

The aides are authorized to work a maximum of three hours daily. The assignments vary from one aide working full-time with one teacher to one aide working part-time with several teachers. The final determination of the division of the three-hour work day is made by the school administrator.

Aide performance is evaluated on a regular basis using either standard forms and procedures developed especially for aides. The responsibility for supervising and monitoring the activities of the aide is jointly shared by the principal, reading teacher, classroom teacher, and in some schools, a lead reading aide. The principal's responsibility involves overseeing the total school operation involving the paraprofessional aide program: initiating and monitoring the evaluative aspects, revising the program to insure continuous and profitable learning experiences in conformance with Board policy and program specifications.

The reading teacher plays a key role in the supervision of the aides. His responsibilities include observation of performance, offering suggestions for improvement, supplying required and requested materials. The reading teacher is responsible for designing staff development workshops and training sessions for teachers and aides. Top priority is given to monitoring the performance of the aides to determine if their involvement produces desired changes in the functioning of teachers in the classroom and the learning styles and habits of the children.

The classroom teacher plays the most important role in the supervision of the aide. Decisions to continue, revise or terminate activities because they succeed or fail are made on an on-going basis by the classroom teacher. The decisions are made as a result of direct observation of the aides performance, pupil reactions to the performance of the aide or the effects of the aide's performance on the instructional program. Accounts of aide performance are recorded on such instruments as observation schedules, checklists and memos.

Tasks of the Paraprofessional Aide

Classroom teachers are forced to spend much of their time on tasks which could be handled by paraprofessional aides. Park (1956), who originated the Bay City, Michigan, experiment found that teachers spent 26 percent of their teaching time performing non-teaching activities. The conclusions of the experiment reported by Wynn and DeRemer (1961) stated that teachers with aides spent more time on instructional activities.

It is reasonable to assume that paraprofessional aides employed in schools perform a variety of tasks but their primary function and responsibility is to increase the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom.

Cronin's (1959) review of the teacher aide experiences included the use of lab assistants, monitors in study halls, as well as a variety of non-professional and clerical duties. To date, very little has been done to determine the kinds of tasks aides should or should not perform. The extent of their involvement in the classroom is basically determined by the classroom teacher and what they do should be restricted only by their personal limitations. (Hornburger, 1968). The literature further reveals that in the United States rules, regulations, guidelines, and laws governing duties are in effect in some states, non-existent in others, and in the process of being developed in others. The inconsistency has led to a variety of interpretations about paraprofessional involvement in the classroom.

The credibility and legality of established regulations or lack of policies and guidelines is being challenged by administrators, teachers, and teacher associations and unions. The National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (1966) indicated in their conference brochure that the use of teacher aides was one of the major emphases when attention was focused on the problems of teachers. The major issue centers arounds the increasing difficulty to distinguish between what constitutes an act of teaching as contrasted with a non-teaching performance.

Pennsylvania is among the states where there are no laws, policy statements, or guidelines regarding the tasks to be performed by aides. The School District of Philadelphia, while not guided by the state, has developed guidelines, which to a certain degree, leads to the clarification of the role of paraprofessionals in the instructional program. The paraprofessional aide, according to Brighton (1972), is a person who enters the school or classroom situation to attend primarily non-instructional tasks and to serve as an observer and resource person for the teacher with all these tasks directed toward the goal of providing the opportunity for optimal education for all children. Philadelphia accepts a definition similar in nature: The paraprofessional aide is an individual who has met the necessary minimum requirements set by the Office of Personnel and qualified through the designated examination process. The aide is one whose duty is to relieve the teacher of the many time-consuming, routine duties not directly related to instruction, freeing the teacher to devote most of his time to individualized and small group instruction than would otherwise be possible. Established guidelines further indicate that the aide will work directly with children under the supervision of the teacher. Generally, the tasks performed by paraprofessionals categorized as clerical duties, supervision of instruction, administrative tasks, preparation and use of instructional resources, and housekeeping tasks.

Specific functioning of the paraprofessional aide in the classroom will vary depending upon the teacher to whom the aide is assigned, the program

being implemented in the classroom, and the capabilities and willingness of the assigned aide. Each of these factors can place certain demands or restrictions on the tasks aides will or will not perform.

In-Service Training of Paraprofessional Aides

The paraprofessional aide, in order to be successful in the execution of duties, must have some form of in-service training as well as clear directions from the professional, and adequate resources and facilities. The best program of in-service training is one which has proved effective, but more important, best meets the needs of the school and individuals to be served. To be meaningful the in-service training program should be designed by those who will be involved and affected by the results. Brennen (1969) indicated that a balanced training program should deal with psychology, child development, and teaching techniques. Harrison (1967) implied that while Brennen's stated areas of staff development are important special attention should be given to the necessary technical competencies schools expect of aides. Primary focus should be on the child and interpersonal relations. Most writers expressed the view that the success or failure of an in-service training program rests largely with the classroom teacher since the degree of responsibility assumed by the paraprofessional is determined by the teacher. The degree of formality attached to the training program will rely heavily on the degree of sophistication of the teacher. (Brighton, 1972). Harrison's (1967) views implied that to be effective an in-service program should include both formal and informal aspects of training.

Formal In-Service Training: Many schools participate in formalized in-service training programs for paraprofessional aides. The programs are conducted at both the district and school level, and are coordinated by district project managers.

The program is comprised of several phases. Phase I of the orientation process is under the direction and supervision of district staff and the Office of School Volunteer personnel. Schools involved in performance contracting have the services of company consultants. These resource people conduct orientation sessions including topics ranging from the introduction and examination of programmed materials to topics on child growth and development, and classroom practices.

Phase II of the program is developed at the individual schools. Teacher specialists assigned to the schools, utilizing a general district format, conduct a series of follow-up sessions in the areas of clerical duties, supervision of instruction, administrative tasks, and preparation and use of instructional resources. Regularly scheduled weekly sessions involve the classroom teachers and the assigned aides. Variations in program emphases and designs are effected as indicated by the needs of the individual school.

Monthly in-service workshops are arranged by district staff. This is referred to as the field-oriented phase of training. Visits are made to the schools and specific areas of concern requested by the school principal and the teachers are dealt with. Classroom observations of aides by staff personnel are periodic during this phase.

Saturday morning workshops are designated as Phase IV. These workshops designed at the district level may be two or three hour sessions set up on a voluntary basis. In some instances participants may receive remuneration.

Incidental On-the-Job Training: Paraprofessional aides come to the job with a wide range of experiences and background. The nature and degree of training will vary accordingly. This is the view taken by those schools that make no provisions for formal in-service training but rely on incidental on-the-job training. Proponents of the informal training program place more emphasis on the "how" than the "what". They believe that a vital factor in guaranteeing success is creating a team operation for teacher and aide whereby both can become more effective in enabling the children to learn. First sessions focus on the school's basic educational objective and polices and the manner in which aides will be involved in the school. (Brighton, 1972). These sessions are usually conducted by the principal. The sessions which follow are structured by the classroom teacher.

Initially, aides are assigned tasks that require no training and little, if any, teacher direction and supervision. During this period the aide has the opportunity to become acquainted with general classroom routines, classroom management, pupil behavior and reactions, and the teacher's mode of operation. Mutual understanding and acceptance is critical in the development of positive working relationships. Emphasis is placed on professionalism, behavior, cooperation, punctuality,and responsibility.

The training received is what produces a "custom-made" aide, (Hornburger, 1968). The aide watches the teacher in action, engages in mutual discussion of ideas and exchange of experiences and then, using initiative and creativity, duplicates the action. Aides have been trained on-the-job in a relatively short period of time to carry out effectively their assigned tasks with no apparent detrimental effects on the teaching-learning process. Educators who advocate this approach to in-service training believe that learning is more profitable in a reality situation - a practicum, a natural laboratory- the classroom. (Brunner, 1966).

The informal training program allots time for evaluation of past experiences and the development of future activites. These sessions provide information and mutual support as well as opportunities to identify and discuss strengths and weaknesses, and plan for improvement.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Population

Four public elementary schools in the School District of Philadelphia where paraprofessional aides have been employed for at least a year were selected for the study. Two of the schools participated in the development and implementation of formal in-service training programs for paraprofessional aides. Two schools provided their aides with incidental on-the-job training. A description of the schools is included in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Pupils and Staff in Participating Schools

	Formal Training		Incidental Training	
Schools	A	B	C	D
Grades	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-5
Enrollment	760	492	1042	1140
No. of Teachers	22	16	25	29
No. of Aides	15	6	14	29
Title 1 Schools	Yes	NO	Yes	Yes

Collection of Data

The data were collected through the use of a questionnaire designed by the researcher entitled "Teacher Survey of Paraprofessional Aide Service". The questionnaire requested that each teacher review and evaluate the duties frequently performed by paraprofessional aides and render a judgement concerning the effectiveness of the service. Five major categories were listed: (1) clerical duties, (2) supervision of instruction, (3) administrative tasks, (4) Preparation and use of instructional resources, and (5) housekeeping tasks. These categories were listed because of their applicability to the typical duties outlined by the School District. Three to six duties were listed under each major category. Space was provided for the respondents to select three activities which aides perform well, with a high degree of consistency, and requiring no further in-service training. Similary, respondents were requested to list three activities which aides have not yet mastered, necessitating additional preparation or in-service training.

The questionnaires were mailed with a cover letter to the 92 classroom teachers of the selected schools. One week after the mailing of the questionnaire, a follow-up memo was mailed to the principals of the schools indicating the teachers who had not responded. This procedure resulted in the return of 49 questionnaires: 21 from the schools involved in formal in-service training programs; 28 from the schools that participated in incidental on-the-job training. The total sample of 49 teachers represented a 53 percent return. Administrators of the schools indicated that the interrupted school year due to a teachers' strike and the date the questionnaires were received attributed to minimal teacher response.

Statistical Procedures

(Participating schools identified as Group I or Group II.) The Group I school designation refers to those schools where the aides were involved in a formalized in-service training program; Group II refers to schools where aides participated in the incidental on-the-job training program. Responses for each group were summarized by totalling the number of different services performed in each of the five categories. A chi square was computed to determine if there were any differences in the frequency of the responses of the two groups.

The quality rating of the services performed was derived by assigning weights of 1,3,5, and 7 to the teacher's evaluations of unsatifactory, fair, good, and excellent respectively. The average rating of each response within a category was computed. These scores were ranked in order of increasing size. The median test was used to determine if differences existed in the service performed by paraprofessional aides when evaluated by teachers in the two groups of schools.

The responses of teachers indicating activites which were perceived as having been mastered and those perceived as requiring additional in-service training were summarized. The three tasks cited most frequently by the respondents in the two areas were identified and charted.

Results

Quantitative Analysis: A summary of responses by category and group is shown in Table 2. The chi square value for each category of tasks is also indicated.

TABLE 2

Performance of Paraprofessionals

Group I - Formal Training
GroupII - Incidental Training

Category	Services performed	Services not performed	Total services performed
Clerical Duties			
Group I	83	43	126
Group II	119	49	168
	202 T	92 T	294 T
			X^2 = .71
Supervision of Instruction			
Group I	101	25	126
Group II	150	18	168
	251 T	43 T	294 T
			X^2 = 4.68 *
Administrative Tasks			
Group I	34	29	63
Group II	52	32	84
	86 T	61 T	147 T
			X^2 = .98

TABLE 2 (continued)

Performance of Paraprofessionals

Group I - Formal Training
Group II Incidental Training

Category	Services performed	Services not performed	Total services performed
Preparation and use of Resources			
Group I	36	48	84
Group II	81	31	112
	117 T	79 T	196 T
			$X^2 = 18.13$ **
Housekeeping Duties			
Group I	46	17	63
Group II	77	7	84
	123 T	24 T	147 T
			$X^2 = 4.98$ *

* - X^2 significant at .05

** - X^2 significant at .001

The data reveal that aides in Group I schools (Formal In-Service Program) and aides in Group II schools (Incidental On-the-Job Training) basically perform duties within the clerical and administrative categories with the same frequency. Aides in Group II schools perform duties within the categories of supervision of instruction, preparation and use of instructional resources, and housekeeping far more frequently than do aides in Group I schools.

Qualitative Analysis: Teachers in Group I schools rated the aides significantly higher in the performance of clerical tasks. In the four remaining categories the teachers in Group I schools rated the performance of the aides somewhat higher but the difference was not significant. The data summarizing the qualitative analysis of teacher rating of paraprofessional aide performance are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Qualitative Analysis of Teacher Rating of Paraprofessional Aide Performance

Clerical Duties

	Group I	Group II
Scores > median	14	9
Scores ≤ median	5	19

$x^2 = 6.24*$

Supervision of Instruction

	Group I	Group II
Scores > median	13	9
Scores ≤ median	8	19

$x^2 = 3.18$

Administrative Tasks

	Group I	Group II
Scores > median	8	11
Scores ≤ median	8	17

$x^2 = 0.140$

TABLE 3 (continued)

Qualitative Analysis of Teacher Rating of Paraprofessional Aide Performance

Preparation and use of Resources

	Group I	Group II
Scores > median	7	11
Scores ≤ median	5	13

$X^2 = 0.125$

Housekeeping Duties

	Group I	Group II
Scores > median	9	14
Scores ≤ median	8	14

$X^2 = .013$

* - significant at .05

There is agreement between teachers in Group I schools and Group II schools on the tasks in which aides are most competent and those where there are the greatest needs. While the order of the frequency differs, the duties are basically the same. Table 4 lists the competencies and needs of paraprofessionals most frequently cited by teachers.

TABLE 4

Competencies and Needs of Paraprofessionals
Most Frequently Cited by Teachers

Tasks perceived as having been mastered, requiring no in-service training	
Group I Schools	Group II Schools
1. Duplicating materials	1. Preparation and duplication of materials
2. Keeping records of pupil progress: marking and checking BRL test and program booklets	2. Supervising small groups, independent activities, tutorial activities
3. Supervising small groups, testing vocabulary, listening to pupils read	3. Recording information: grading papers, keeping attendance records
Tasks perceived as requiring additional in-service training	
Group I Schools	Group II Schools
1. Supervision of children in absence of teacher	1. Supervision of children in absence of teacher
2. Use of techniques involving phonics and general testing	2. Operation and use of equipment
3. Operation and use of equipment	3. Use of special techniques for slow learners

CONCLUSIONS

Discussion of Results

Fulltime or parttime service of paraprofessional aides were available to all teachers. Their duties were performed exclusively in the development of the schools reading program.

Solicited teacher responses seemed to indicate that the in-service training program initiated and implemented at each selected school was realistic and practical for the kind of reading program in operation. Involvement in a programmed reading project necessitated formal in-service training at the Group I schools, while an eclectic approach at Group II schools required an incidental on-the-job in-service training program.

Paraprofessional aides basically perform duties in each of the categories. Clerical and administrative duties were emphasized in the formal in-service training program. Analysis of the data seem to indicate that aides involved in the formalized program exerted little, if any, initiative in undertaking tasks in each category not specified and discussed during the training program.

Paraprofessional aides in both school groups performed tasks in the supervision of instruction category. A summary of the responses by teachers of aides in Group I schools indicated that supervisory activities performed by the aides were limited to materials associated with the Behavioral Research Laboratories reading program (BRL Org.). Teachers in Group II schools revealed that the aides performed a variety of tasks using their own initiative

and creativeness.

There was evidence that teachers in Group I schools and Group II schools agreed on the tasks the aides performed consistently well and the tasks requiring additional in-service training. The task cited most frequently by teachers as needing intensive in-service training dealt with classroom supervision or control. While the teachers expect aides to be more competent in supervising the children during temporary teacher absence from the room, there is a need to make the teachers aware that paraprofessional aides are not legally responsible for the maintenance of classes in the absence of the professional.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the study it may be concluded that-

1. Incidental on-the-job training for paraprofessional aides include aspects that are organized and developed in a formalized manner.
2. Teacher respondents agree that the assignment of paraprofessional aides to classrooms is a necessity and aides are generally effective in the services they perform.
3. All aides need in-service training and can use additional in-service and continued exposure to ideas, materials, methods and procedures.
4. A formal in-service training program did not reveal a signifant difference in the overall performance of aides in the classroom.
5. The classroom teacher or the program being developed in a school is the key to the way the paraprofessional aide functions in the classroom.
6. The kind of training program a school selects and develops should be the type that best meets the needs of the school, its population and programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher responses to the effectiveness of the performance of para-professional aides who have been involved in forman and informal in-service training program lend support to the following recommendations:

1. The decision about the kind of in-service program to be developed should be made at the local school level or should be based on the needs expressed by local school personnel.

2. Additional time must be provided whereby teacher and aide can discuss and plan without pupils in the classroom.

3. Formal in-service training programs, when geared to specific instructional programs, must outline methods and procedures to be utilized by teachers to discover any special talent the aide may have and utilize them, and guide the aide to her fullest potential.

4. There is reason to clearly define the role of the aide as it relates to supervision of children when the teacher is temporarily out of the room.

5. Future in-service training programs should include increased emphasis on the use and operation of audio-visual equipment.

6. Substitute aides should be employed and trained to alleviate the detrimental effects created by sudden resignations and leaves of absence.

7. The results of the study should be made available to the principals of the selected school to serve as a guide in restructuring or supplementing their in-service training program.

8. Aides in the selected schools were all female. More effort should be exerted by the schools to attract men into the program.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

F. D. PASTORIUS SCHOOL
E. Chelten Ave. & Sprague St.
Phila., Pa.

June 1, 1973
Vi 3-2424

TO: Classroom Teachers

FROM: Hytolia R. James, Principal

SUBJECT: Paraprofessional Program Evaluation Questionnaire

In order to ascertain the degree of effectiveness of paraprofessionals and to determine in-service needs and priorities, I would appreciate your cooperation in responding to the enclosed questionnaire. Your input can be of invaluable service in helping us to assess the areas of greatest concern and make necessary adjustments.

All individual responses and feelings expressed will be kept in strictest confidence by the Researcher. This questionnaire is to be filled out and returned to the school secretary who will forward all replies via pony to:

Hytolia R. James
Principal
F. D. Pastorius School
E. Chelten Ave. & Sprague St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19138

I am aware of the dedication and cooperation that you have shown in the past. I have therefore turned to you to assist me in making vital decisions that will affect our children. I wish to thank you and urge you to continue working with our boys and girls in helping them to achieve their maximum educational capacities.

F. D. Pastorius Public School
E. Chelten Ave. & Sprague St.
Phila., Pa. 19119

Dr. Bernard G. Kelner
District Six Superintendent

Hytolia R. James
Principal

TEACHER SURVEY OF PARAPROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Name of School _____

Philadelphia School District _____

Grade(s) - Subject _____

Position
- Classroom teacher (appointed)
- Reading teacher
- Substitute
- Other (please explain) _____

Years of Teaching Experience _____

Directions

Listed below are the administrative, supervisory and clerical duties frequently performed by Paraprofessional Aides. You are asked to consider the tasks and your present Aide - and render a judgment concerning the effectiveness of the aide as she performs certain tasks. Please indicate the calibre of service by checking one of the following categories: excellent, good, fair, unsatisfactory.

I Clerical Duties	U	F	G	E
1. Takes Daily attendance	___	___	___	___
2. Grades papers	___	___	___	___
3. Records grades	___	___	___	___
4. Files materials	___	___	___	___
5. Duplicates instructional materials	___	___	___	___
6. Maintains supplies and supervises their distribution	___	___	___	___

	U	F	G	E
2. Supervision of Instruction				
1. Supervises small groups of children working in independent activities	___	___	___	___
2. Supervises individual children working independently	___	___	___	___
3. Reads stories to the class	___	___	___	___
4. Listens to pupils read	___	___	___	___
5. Displays a knowledge of the materials used in the classroom program	___	___	___	___
6. Prepares work in advance when providing tutorial service	___	___	___	___
3. Administrative Tasks	U	F	G	E
1. Supervises children on the playground	___	___	___	___
2. Maintains order when teacher is temporarily out of the room	___	___	___	___
3. Takes responsibilit for interest centers, scienss table, etc.	___	___	___	___
4. Preparation and use of Instructional Resources	U	F	G	E
1. Uses audio-visual materials and rquipment	___	___	___	___
2. Assists in the selection and use of learning materials	___	___	___	___
3. Makes suggestion for the improvement of materials	___	___	___	___
4. Uses initiative to develop instructional aids.	___	___	___	___
5. Housekeeping Tasks	U	F	G	E
1. Keeps work area neat and orderly	___	___	___	___
2. Assists in preparing work area for activities	___	___	___	___
3. Assists in cleaning up work areas	___	___	___	___

Examine the list and select three activities which your Aide performs well, with a high degree of consistency. List them in the spaces provided. Select three activities which your Aide has not yet mastered and which will require additional in-service training. List them in the spaces provided.

Three activities which aides do consistently well and require no further in-service activities are:

1._____

2._____

3._____

Three activities which require additional in-service preparation are:

1._____

2._____

3._____

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